

12/1/2024

Dear “Long-timers” at Living Word Church:

The following letter is about our new plan to create an official membership roll at Living Word.

Living Word Church membership has many wonderful benefits, including a member-rate for LWA tuition, the opportunity to rent at the Residence, long-term trailer use at LW Camp, and pastoral services like weddings and funerals. Obviously, Living Word members have experienced this full table of benefits without an official membership roll.

Additionally, even though none of the current pastors, elders, trustees, deacons, or employees has previously been asked to sign a paper saying, “I’m a member of Living Word,” church membership has always been a non-negotiable prerequisite for leadership and/or employment opportunity at Living Word.

The point is that while no formal, on-paper membership roll has been kept, a strongly enforced membership roll has often been used when giving church benefits or opportunities. We have gotten along without the formalities. And we will continue to get along without them for you if that’s what you personally prefer.

We assure you that if you have been saved, been attending Living Word regularly for more than three years, been serving in its ministries, and been contributing a portion of your income to its treasury, *you are already a recognized member of Living Word Church*. But we ask a favor, even if you are a “long-timer”:

Please read and sign the attached “Membership Affirmation” even if you are already a recognized member of Living Word Church.

In other words, please make it formal. All the pastors and elders have already expressed that they feel blessed and privileged to be able to sign a membership roll. We expect most of you will as well.

One reason we need a formal membership roll as we go forward is to protect the church legally. People with an anti-Bible agenda may attend our church with the hidden purpose of challenging our Biblical positions. They may attend for some time and donate a few dollars before they reveal their agenda. For instance, after attending for a while, they may challenge us to officiate at their same-sex wedding. They may insist, “. . .like the weddings you hold for other members of the church.” We might be in a legally vulnerable position to deny their claim to membership if we don’t have an already-established membership standard.

Another reason we need to formalize membership in our church is because we get many requests to use our facilities and pastoral services from people who know us, think well of us, but are not members of the church. For example, we often get requests for funerals, weddings, parties, and other events. The requests may come from people who have been to the Academy, visited the church a few times, or attended regularly many years ago. Sometimes the requests come from church members on the behalf of their non-member relatives. We want to be able to say, “The facility (or service) is for church members only,” but without a formal membership roll this response is vague, arbitrary, and irresponsible.

Please help us create an official membership roll for our church by signing the attached “Affirmation of Membership.” But, to repeat, if you are already a recognized member of the church, you will not personally lose your church benefits if you decide not to sign. Thank you!

Blessings,
the Pastors and Elders

Living Word Church
6099 Court St. Rd.
Syracuse, NY 13206

Affirmation of Membership

1 Corinthians 12:18

But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

Every person 16 years old or older must submit his or her own affirmation to be a recognized member of Living Word Church. The affirmation may be submitted to the address above or dropped in a tithe box. It will be confirmed by the elders of the church, and you will be notified of the confirmation by mail.

Luke 10:20 ...rejoice that your names are written in heaven.

1. Name (must be 16 or older):

Address, so we may confirm your affirmation:

Ephesians 6:4 ...bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

2. The names of those (under 16 years old) you are speaking for in addition to yourself:

_____ (name) _____ (relationship)

_____ (name) _____ (relationship)

_____ (name) _____ (relationship)

_____ (name) _____ (relationship)

_____ (name) _____ (relationship)

_____ (name) _____ (relationship)

_____ (name) _____ (relationship)

_____ (name) _____ (relationship)

Romans 10:9 If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

1 Timothy 4:6 ...nourished on the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed.

Romans 6:17 But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance.

Hebrews 10:25 ...not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing.

1 Corinthians 16:2 ...each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income.

- a. I confess the Lordship of Jesus and believe in my heart that God resurrected Jesus bodily.
- b. I accept the Living Word "Doctrinal Statement," published here:
<https://www.livingword.live/about-us>
- c. I intend, by God's grace, to live righteously, according to the standards of the Bible.
- d. I plan on attending Living Word Church several times per month.
- e. I plan to regularly donate a portion of my income to Living Word Church.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

- If you discontinue regularly attending Living Word Church, it will be understood that you are discontinuing your membership, unless you explain a suitable exception.
- If you begin regularly attending another church (more than for a visit), it will be understood that you are discontinuing your membership in Living Word Church, unless you explain a suitable exception.
- The elders reserve the right to revoke a membership in Living Word Church if they find you are living in a manner inconsistent with the claims on this affirmation.

SIGNATURE STATEMENT:

I have read and understood the above affirmation. I have reviewed the requirements for membership with Christian sincerity. I sign below with no other motive than to be recognized as a member of Living Word Church, 6099 Court St. Rd. Syracuse, NY.

(signed)

(date)